

**STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL**

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

III. JOB CLASSES AND SPECIFICATIONS

A. Purpose

The purpose of this SOP is to provide guidelines to establish and revise job classes and to write class specifications.

B. Scope

These guidelines apply to all job classes covering positions in the classified and partially exempt services.

C. Authority

AS 39.25.150(1)—Requires Rules on a Classification Plan
2 AAC 07.005--Classification Plan
2 AAC 07.010--Class Specifications
2 AAC 07.015--Class Titles

D. Job Classes

A job class is a group of one or more positions which are sufficiently similar with respect to duties and responsibilities, degree of supervision exercised and received, and entrance requirements so that:

1. The same title can be used to clearly identify each position.
2. The same minimum qualifications for initial appointment can be established for all positions.
3. The same rate of basic pay can be fairly applied to all positions.
4. Employees in a particular class are considered an appropriate group for purposes of layoff and recall.

A job class should be constructed as broadly feasible for as long as the tests of similarity are met.

E. Establishing or Revising a Job Class

A job class is developed or revised on the basis of all the data available from the data collection techniques identified in SOP 07-II.

The procedures are:

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1. Analyze the Position Descriptions (PDs) and other supporting documentation.
2. Collect additional information as needed to delineate the tasks performed, the nature, variety and complexity of work, the nature of supervisory controls, guidelines, contacts, originality, recommendations, decisions, consequence of error, supervision exercised and received, and the knowledge, skills, abilities and minimum qualifications required. Document sources of information. (See data collection methods SOP 07-II.)
3. Determine the types of work covered by the information gathered. If the information covers more than one of the categories below, separate class specifications should be written.
 - a. Professional – work is creative, analytical, evaluative, interpretive, and requires a range and depth of specialized and theoretical knowledge in a field of science or learning characteristically acquired through education or training equivalent to a Bachelor’s degree or higher. The work requires the exercise of discretion, judgement and personal responsibility for the application of an organized body of knowledge that is constantly studied to make new discoveries and interpretations, and to improve data, materials and methods.
 - b. Administrative – work involves the exercise of analytical ability, judgement, discretion and personal responsibility, and the application of a substantial body of knowledge of principles, concepts and practices applicable to one or more fields of administration or management. While these positions do not require specialized education, they do involve the type of skills (analytical, research, writing judgement) typically gained through a college level education, or through progressively responsible experience. Employees engaged in administrative work are concerned with analyzing, evaluating, modifying and developing the basic programs, policies and procedures, which facilitate the work of agencies and their programs.
 - c. Paraprofessional/Technical – work is typically associated with and supportive of a professional or administrative field. It involves extensive practical knowledge, gained through experience and/or specific training. Work in these occupations may involve substantial elements of the work of the professional or administrative field, but requires less than full knowledge of the field involved.

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Paraprofessional employees carry out tasks, methods, procedures,

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and computations that are covered by established precedents or guidelines and often require a high degree of skill, care and precision.

- d. Clerical— work involves processing data normally initiated elsewhere, or easily ascertained that is subject to verification, revision, correction and forwarding for action, referral, or archiving. The work is structured, often repetitive and performed in accordance with established guidelines.

- 4. Analyze the information; group together positions which are similar in kind and level of work; and structure the series. Define and describe the journey level first, and then define other levels in the series. Some of the following levels may be in a series; however, **not all series will include all of these levels.**

- a. Entry level. Introductory assignments consist of basic or elementary tasks and duties. This level is appropriate when these tasks and duties constitute the primary purpose of one or more positions. This level is the entry into a series, typically after high school or college. Experience gained at this level will qualify an incumbent for the next level.
- b. Trainee level. Similar to the entry level but includes as a significant duty the completion of training to perform at the journey level. This level is suited for flexibly staffed or coupled classes. The goal is to provide training to perform journey level work.
- c. Developmental (or advanced trainee) level. Assignments involve completion of limited, well-defined projects or completion of portions of the work for the purpose of furthering the incumbent's training. This level occurs in occupations with an identified journey level that requires an extended training period with distinct, progressive levels or phases of training.
- d. Journey, Full Working or Benchmark level. A variety of assignments that are typical of the field or profession. Incumbents perform the full range of assignments independently, using standard methods and techniques of the field. This level usually requires both knowledge and experience in the related job area as a minimum qualification. Most positions in an organization should

fall into this level. In some instances, this is the first level in the

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series.

- e. Advanced level. Assignments consist of unusual, difficult or exceptional matters encountered in the work, which are completed by modifying approaches, methods or techniques. Specialists sometimes fit into this category. There must be clear distinctions between this level and the journey level.
 - f. Lead level. Continuous lead responsibility over employees while also performing the same or similar work. Lead responsibilities include instructing and training staff, assigning and checking work, setting task priorities, and preparing evaluations. Lead responsibilities may also include involvement in appointing or promoting, but not at the level of full supervisory authority.
 - g. Supervisory level. Assignments include the authority and responsibility to take action or to effectively recommend the appointment, transfer, promotion, discipline or settlement of grievances of a subordinate employee or employees.
 - h. Manager level. Primary assignment is the managerial and/or supervisory responsibility for a major program or programs. Emphasis is on planning, organizing, directing and controlling resources and program delivery. This level may be separated from the series and titled "chief" or "program manager".
- 4. After structuring the classes, the next step is to prepare draft class specifications (see section F). The Division of Personnel will send a memorandum and the draft specification to all affected departments and to other sections of the division as appropriate for review and comment.
 - 5. After receiving comments, the classifier will make revisions if appropriate.
 - 6. A salary analysis is performed and the salary range is set.
 - 7. Final approval for the class specification and salary range assignment must be obtained from the Division of Personnel before the specification is implemented and distributed.
 - 8. When the specification is finalized, Division of Personnel staff is responsible for issuing the final documents.

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- a. Final class specification in hard copy to all agency classifiers, and to the Division of Personnel staff for placement on-line through Workplace Alaska.
- b. Memorandum establishing the class or reporting changes to the old class (Addendum A). The memorandum will include the class title, class code, range, EEO and SOC code, action, effective date, and salary analysis.
- c. Positions in the job class(es) involved must be reviewed when significant changes are made to the Definition, Distinguishing Characteristics, or Examples of Work. Allocation of individual positions should be contained in a separate memorandum that accompanies the specification package; or be incorporated into the cover memorandum under b.

F. Writing Class Specifications

Each job class must be described in a class specification. The format is included in Addendum B; the elements required are described below.

1. Class Codes

Classification Section staff based on the classification plan will assign class codes.

2. Class Titles

The class title should be the best descriptive title for the work. It should concisely and accurately convey the kind and level of work performed. Make the title as brief as possible and still easily recognized and understood by potential applicants. Use gender neutral titles.

The class should be well defined and distinguished before assigning the title.

3. Definition

The essential "reason for being" of the position or positions in the class is stated in the **Definition**. This is a concise statement of the overall kind and level of work performed by the class. Its meaning should be as clear to the general reader as possible.

The **Definition** may contain options, such as two discrete functions of

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equivalent level and kind, where each deserves recognition and is of significant magnitude to deserve it.

The level of the class within the occupation (trainee, journey, etc. See E.3 above) should be identified, even if there are no positions at other levels.

Levels of supervision. The following phrases are a shorthand method for describing the level of supervision received by positions in the class. Use these phrases **only** if they are applicable. If none of the phrases describes positions in the class, do not use them. Instead, write a description of the supervision received.

- a. **Under Immediate Supervision.** Methods of performing tasks are explained (orally or in writing) in specific terms and the supervisor while in progress and upon completion reviews work.
- b. **Under General Supervision.** Methods of performing tasks are explained (orally or in writing) in general terms and work is reviewed by the supervisor upon completion.
- c. **Under Direction.** Methods of performing tasks are usually left to the judgment of employee with the supervisor available for assistance if needed. Work is reviewed upon completion.
- d. **Under General Direction.** Methods of performing tasks are the responsibility of employee so long they are as within established policies and procedures. Work is reviewed only periodically to assure conformance and to measure results.
- e. **Under General Administrative Direction.** The employee has wide latitude in interpreting and applying policies, rules and regulations and performance is measured by total results. This is typically found only in the highest level managerial job classes.

4. Distinguishing Characteristics:

This part of the specification describes those characteristics of the work of the class that distinguish it from all other classes. It addresses difficulty and complexity in terms of supervision exercised and received, types of

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assignments, procedures, methods of work, control over the employees' work, variety and scope of work, and the like. It should also include statements, which establish the boundaries of the class by comparing it with other directly related classes and stating specifically how they differ from the subject class.

5. Examples of Work

This section lists examples of the work typically performed. It is not meant to be all-inclusive but should be indicative of the kind and level of work assigned to positions in the class. Statements should be written clearly and concisely. Do not use unexplained abbreviations or acronyms.

List those duties which are most characteristic of the job class and the most useful in showing the boundaries of the class. List each duty on a separate line or paragraph, beginning with those, which are most indicative of the class. Start each duty description with an action verb:

Types financial reports . . .

Repairs automotive equipment . . .

Writes letters and reports . . .

Duty descriptions should also include details sufficient to clearly describe the work to an applicant or employee who is not familiar with the class, and to allow differentiation from work performed by employees in other job classes. Details may include, for example, how work is done or the purpose of the task.

<u>Verb</u>	<u>Incomplete Statement</u>	<u>Improved Statement</u>
Assists	with budget preparation.	Assists section chief with budget preparation by typing and proofing budget documents, checking calculations.
		OR
		Gathers data from previous year's budget reviews equipment and staffing needs submitted by units; reviews legislation, writes fiscal notes, projects equipment and personnel costs; recommends adjustment to the director.

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<u>Verb</u>	<u>Incomplete Statement</u>	<u>Improved Statement</u>
Handles	Handles confidential material	Types confidential reports, reviews reports, reviews materials for inclusion in files, prevents unauthorized persons from entering record area, reviews material provided to other agencies and removes any confidential information.
Maintains	Maintains files.	Files materials according to subject, makes copies as needed.
	Maintains equipment.	Reports any problems with equipment after use, makes minor adjustments and repairs as needed, reports major malfunctions to supervisor, inspects all equipment semiannually.
Participates	Participates in meetings.	Attends meeting of international organizations regarding marine mammal conservation; speaks on behalf of the department to explain the State's current policy and activity in this area.
Prepares	Prepares correspondence.	Types letters and memorandum from handwritten draft. OR Prepares correspondence for commissioner's signature by reviewing incoming mail, selecting those items not requiring the commissioner's prior review, drafts letter, submits for typing and gives to the commissioner in final form for signature.
Processes	Processes applications	Processes applications by logging them in, checking for completeness, and screening for minimum qualifications.
Researches	Researches files.	Gathers information from files, develops chronologies and summaries based on information in files.

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<u>Verb</u>	<u>Incomplete Statement</u>	<u>Improved Statement</u>
	Researches life-cycle of meadow-vole in South central Alaska	Researches life-cycle of meadow-vole in South-central Alaska by developing methodology, determining equipment and staff needs, supervising data collection . . .
Uses	Uses chemicals.	Uses chemicals and solvents to clean test tubes, sterilize laboratory equipment. Uses chemicals to clean and preserve artifacts.

6. Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

In this section, list the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that even the most minimally qualified **newly appointed** employee should possess to perform work of the class. Do not include KSAs which are usually or only acquired by serving in the job.

The KSAs should cover all significant aspects of the work. They serve as guides to developing tests and work standards. KSAs should be measurable or verifiable through assessment devices such as tests, demonstrations, observations, or reviews of previous accomplishments. Do not refer to such personal elements as honesty, sobriety, industry and dependability; these attributes are requirements for employment in any position.

KSAs represent requirements needed to enter into the work of the job class, not those required for full performance. Do not include any KSAs that could reasonably be acquired by serving in the job. KSAs should cover all significant aspects of the work.

Definitions for components of this section are:

- a. **Some Knowledge.** This represents familiarity with the particular subject matter concerned, based on completing introductory training or course work in the field, self-study, or limited practice in the field.
- b. **Working Knowledge.** This represents sufficient knowledge to perform effectively in a range of work situations.

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- c. **Considerable Knowledge.** This represents sufficient knowledge of the subject to enable the employee to perform effectively in all normal work situations of the field.
- d. **Thorough Knowledge.** This represents advanced knowledge of the subject to enable the employee to perform unusually difficult and complex assignments in the field.
- e. **Extensive Knowledge.** This represents a broad and intensive grasps of substantially all areas of the subject to enable the employee to originate new hypotheses, concepts or approaches and/or to direct their implementation.
- f. **Ability.** A potential, either developed or not, for performing the associated task.
- g. **Skill.** A demonstrated capacity to perform the physical or mental activities required performing the associated task.

When writing KSA statements, remember that a single statement from one level could be applied to a higher or lower level, or might be appropriate to more than one occupational group.

7. Minimum Qualifications

Minimum qualifications determine who will be considered for appointment.

- a. **Training** is expressed in terms of formal education or specialized vocational training that is regarded as normal preparation for a given field.
- b. **Experience** is expressed in terms of the kinds and amount of prior work activities (paid or volunteer) that would prepare an employee to perform the specific duties of the class.

Minimum qualifications must relate to the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the work and may be subject to legal scrutiny to ensure they do not create any artificial barriers to the employment of individuals in protected classes (See EEOC Uniform Guidelines on Selection).

Exercise care and judgment in stating qualifications to ensure they are job related: do not confuse "minimum qualifications" with "desired

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qualifications."

The statement of required training should generally be limited to the basic formal training, which customarily prepares individuals for work in a field. Some jobs require specific degrees, licenses or certifications (law degree, Commercial Driver's License, etc.) for which no substitution is allowed. Some do not require a degree but do specify course work for which no substitution is allowed. In this case, the number of required quarter or semester hours in the specific field may be identified. It is good practice to mention any specialized training courses or programs, which could qualify an applicant for the job class when they are commonly available and could reasonably be acquired as basic preparation.

The experience requirement is intended to ensure new employees can perform the work after a period of orientation or familiarization. Experience should be directly related to the actual duties of position in the class. Required experience should not normally be equivalent to the work to be performed. This would be excessive as a minimum requirement. A description of the experience required should be followed by its equivalent in a State of Alaska job class, if possible.

Examples:

Laboratory Assistant I--No specific type or amount is required.

Laboratory Assistant II--One year of experience sterilizing and assembling glassware, instruments and apparatus; packaging and wrapping specimen containers and immunizing agents; and performing related work in a laboratory. This experience is equivalent to one year as a Laboratory Assistant I with the State of Alaska.

General Guidelines

Related families of jobs should have similar general requirements at each level in the series. The following are **very general** guidelines:

Levels

Remark

Skilled Trades, Crew
Chief, Senior Technician

Training + experience = 3-4 years

Entry Professional

BA or experience substitution

Journey Professional

BA + 1 year relevant experience

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<u>Levels</u>	<u>Remark</u>
Senior Professional	BA + 1 year journey experience
Supervisory Professional	
Manager/Second line supervisory professional	BA + 1-2 years relevant experience
Administrator	BA + 1-2 years relevant experience

The stated training and experience examples do not exclude others that would provide equivalent preparation. Different kinds of formal training or self-study, or different kinds and amount of experience may be accepted if they provide equivalent preparation. These equivalents should be addressed in a substitution statement.

Complete the Minimum Qualifications section even when there are no minimums, stating "none required."

8. Substitution

Almost all classes have alternative methods of meeting minimum qualifications. The exception is a degree, license or certification requirement with no alternative options, such as a medical degree for a doctor or passing the state bar for an attorney. For other classes, include any substitution statement under the subheading "substitution."

State the specific alternative experience or education, which will substitute for a specified minimum qualification. For example:

"Progressively responsible experience performing _____ will substitute for the required education on a year for year basis."

"Graduate study in _____ will substitute for up to one year of the required experience."

Refer to Addendum B for standard examining equivalencies for education.

If there is a requirement for which there is no substitution, this should be clearly stated.

Work with representatives responsible for determining whether applicants meet MQs early on in drafting minimum qualifications and special requirements. Be sure their understanding of the minimum qualifications

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is the same as yours.

For PX classes, the qualifications will be titled "Recommended Qualifications."

9. Special Requirements

This section identifies job requirements such as professional licenses (e.g., for a nurse or engineer), certificates (e.g., occupational therapist or police officer), special course work, driver's license, etc. There must be at least one duty statement in the examples of duties that shows why the requirement is necessary. These requirements must be met at time of application or within a specified time after appointment.

Special requirements other than professional licenses, certificates, or drivers' licenses must be specifically approved by the Classification Manager.

10. NOTE

This area lists working conditions, physical demands, or other aspects of the job of which applicants should be aware at the time they apply. In most instances listing physical demands in the KSAs section will be adequate. Use judgement in determining if it is significant or unusual enough to be included in a minimum qualification note so applicants will see it at the time they apply. Keep in mind the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act with regard to essential functions.

Examples:

"Requires working rotating shifts"

"Requires frequent travel to remote areas"

11. Class History

This section should list the dates of all changes/revisions, followed by a brief notation describing the change/revision. Initials of the specification writer(s) follow.

Examples:

Orig: 08/01/72 (CA/DS).

Rev: 09/01/78 Definition rephrased (CA/KAM/DS)

Rev: 11/01/88 MQs revised. MQ Questions created. (PA/DS)

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